

Spy chiefs try to recruit Jane Bonds

adapted from an article by **Kate McCann**

- 1 British intelligence agencies MI5, MI6 and GCHQ have all used Mumsnet to find new female spies, dubbed Jane Bonds. It marks the first time the intelligence agencies have admitted to using female-friendly websites to recruit more women.
- 2 A new report on plans to rebalance the intelligence workforce states that the security services are looking for women with “high emotional intelligence, rather than focusing on standard qualifications” and are keen to demonstrate the family-friendly nature of working as a spy. Flexible working and allowing women with new babies to bring their children to so-called ‘keep-in-touch’ days in the office are part of plans to boost the number of female spies.
- 3 A recommendation sent to intelligence bosses in 2015 states: “The agencies should explore groups other than graduates. Women or mothers in middle-age or midcareer, who may have taken some years out to bring up children, may offer an untapped recruitment pool.” Middle-aged women working in social or care professions or who do not work at all are being targeted, because they have valuable life experience which could lend itself to working in the secret agencies. Recruiters are also being given ‘unconscious bias training’ to prevent them from sidelining older women or those who may be considering children, as part of plans to stop women ending up in administration jobs.
- 4 Gisela Stuart MP, a member of the Intelligence and Security Committee, told *The Telegraph*: “These kinds of jobs require highly specialist skills but the broader the base from which they recruit, the more likely it is they get the best people, so it’s important that’s widened. Half the population are women so this is a recognition that the intelligence services must respond to the population within which they operate. But I would also hope that with that target comes recognition that women need to be fairly represented at all levels of the organisation because in order to have institutional change you need critical mass and determination by management to make it happen.”



- 5 The report follows speculation that Gillian Anderson, the actress famous for her role as Scully in the *X-Files*, could be the next 007 in the famous James Bond franchise. Fans mocked up a picture of the actress posing as the next Bond character amid calls for the films to cast a woman in the leading role after Daniel Craig revealed he will not continue in the job.

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